Fear God: Honour the King.

A

DISCOURSE

On MATT. xxii. 21.

PREACHED IN THE

Methodist Chapel, BATH,

On SUNDAY, JANUARY 19th, 1794.

By HENRY MOORE.

LONDON:

Printed by G. PARAMORE, North-Green, Worship-Street.

Sold by G. WHITFIELD, at the Chapel, City-Road; and at the Methodist Preaching-Houses in Town and Country. 1794.

[Price TWO-PENCE.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Sermon was preached in the uſual line of miniſterial duty, without any deſign of publication. It is now printed at the repeated and earneſt deſire of the Congregation.

We have carefully read the following Sermon in Manuſcript, previous to its publication; and do highly approve of it. We believe it to be perfectly agreeable to the ſentiments of the Body of Methodiſts, and do cordially recommend it to the ſerious peruſal of all our People.

Briſtol,
Feb. 13, 1794.

THOMAS COKE,
SAMUEL BRADBURN.

This Sermon has alſo met with the approbation of the Book-Committee.

A DISCOURSE.

MATT. xxii. 21.

Render therefore unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's; and unto GOD, *the things that are* GOD'S.

IT was foretold by *Iſaiah*, ſeveral hundred years before our Lord appeared in the fleſh, that he ſhould be deſpiſed and rejected of men. There were ſeveral reaſons for this. 1. He was a poor man. Though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. This was contrary to the expectation of the Jews. They looked for their Meſſiah to appear with external pomp and power. But when they ſaw him, they hid as it were their faces from him, and cried, Is not this the Carpenter's Son? He who had not where to lay his head was of ſmall account with thoſe who were covetous, and proud of worldly diſtinctions.

2. This contempt was greatly heightened when this poor man aſſerted his proper

character. When they heard him ſay, I am the Reſurrection and the Life: If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins; they were filled with indignation, and cried out, he hath a Devil and is mad, why hear ye him?

3. The authority alſo with which he taught, and the ſeverity with which he expoſed the Hypocriſy of their moſt admired characters, ſtrengthened the Enmity againſt him. Hence it was determined, in their council, that whoſoever acknowledged him, ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.

It could not be, but that he who was thus hated of the world, becauſe he teſtified of it that its deeds were evil, ſhould have all manner of evil ſpoken of him, and be numbered with the tranſgreſſors both in life and death.

But his enemies were not ſatisfied with ſtriving to make void his teaching by wreſting his words, and charging his moſt divine actions with ſin, they took counſel, we are told in this paſſage, how they might entangle him in his talk. In order to this, as St. Luke informs us, ch. xx. 20, they

ſent

ſent forth ſpies, feigning themſelves to be juſt men, (men of a tender ſcrupulous conſcience,) to queſtion him concerning ſubmiſſion to the Civil Power, that, as the ſame Evangeliſt obſerves, they might deliver him to the power and authority of the Governor.

It was no doubt matter of ſurpriſe to all the people, that our Lord had been ſilent upon every queſtion of this kind. The nation at large looked out for a Deliverer from the Roman yoke. Even his own Diſciples expected a temporal kingdom, and that he ſhould be, in that ſenſe, placed upon the Throne of David. This was thought to be expreſsly aſſerted in the ancient Prophecies. This general expectation had ſo awakened the jealouſy of Herod, that upon the report of the Wiſe Men, reſpecting the birth of the Meſſiah, he ſent forth his ſoldiers, and barbarouſly murdered all the infants in the confines of *Bethlehem*, hoping to deſtroy him among them, whoſe ſtar had appeared in the eaſt, and who was born King of the Jews.

But truth is always conſiſtent with itſelf. His kingdom is not of this world; and hence he not only abſtained from all in-

terference with the Civil Government, but from any expreſſion concerning it. It is true, as God over all, bleſſed for ever, his kingdom is univerſal: and this the world ſhall know, when his enemies ſhall be made his footſtool. Of his kingdom in this reſpect, it is not for us to know the times and the ſeaſons. But we know that he was manifeſt in the fleſh to take away our ſins, and to purify to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works, and holy as he who called them is holy: a people that ſhould render to all their due; and by well-doing put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.

His enemies, however, were reſolved that he ſhould ſpeak on this ſubject; and they choſe for this purpoſe ſome of their own diſciples, and aſſociated with them the Herodians. How ſtrange is this! No contraries held more antipathy than thoſe who were thus united in this attempt. The Phariſees hated the Roman Government, as having broken the Sceptre of Judah, and introduced the heathen into the inheritance of the Lord. Hence their averſion to the Publicans, who were the Tax-gatherers

ers appointed by that Power, and who who were looked upon as the badges of the ſlavery of Iſrael. The Herodians, on the contrary were courtiers, peculiarly attached to Herod, and conſequently zealous for the intereſt of the Roman Government, which was the main ſupport of his family. But theſe implacable enemies to each other, united together againſt an excellence which condemned the vices of both, without miniſtering to the views of either party.

Theſe wolves now came to him in ſheep's cloathing. Maſter, ſaid they, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in truth; neither careſt thou for any man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men. (What a teſtimony! ſo the Devil can ſpeak truth for his own purpoſe.) Tell us therefore, what thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæſar, or not? Here was a maſter-piece of the wiſdom from beneath! How ſhall he extricate himſelf from this dilemma? If he ſaid yes, the Phariſees would have accuſed him to the people, as a betrayer of the liberties of his country, and an ene-

my to the expected kingdom of the Meſſiah. If he ſaid no, the Herodians would have accuſed him to the Roman Governor.

But Jeſus knowing their wickedneſs, ſaid, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? ſhew me the tribute money. And they brought to him a penny, (a Denarius, a Roman ſilver coin, about ſeven-pence halfpenny in value.) He ſaith to them, Whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription? They ſay to him, Cæſar's: plainly acknowledging, by their having received his coin, that they were under his Government. (And this is a ſtanding rule. The current coin of every nation ſhews in whom the Government is veſted.) Render therefore, ſays our Lord, to Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's; and unto God, the things that are God's. And hearing it, they marvelled, at the wiſdom of his anſwer, and that he ſhould thus eſcape out of their hands. And they left him, and went their way. And thus to all who learn of him, he will give a mouth and wiſdom, that all their adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or reſiſt.

One

One is our maſter, even Chriſt. He ſays, learn of me; and the eternal Father declares, this is my beloved Son; hear ye him. It is only thus that we can avoid thoſe ſnares which the God of this world lays in the path of thoſe who are enemies to his kingdom. Men of the world, who fear not God, will always act as paſſion, appetite, or pride excite them. The things that are God's are of no moment with them. Every conſideration gives place to the ignorant, or intereſted clamour of the day: and God muſt be worſhipped or obeyed, as comports with their ideas of worldly proſperity. On the other hand, it muſt be confeſſed that many who have known God, have not in this reſpect kept themſelves pure. Many of them have given place to that notion, that dominion was founded in grace, and on this account they have acted as though the kingdoms of the world, were already made the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt, and that he was come to reign before his ancients gloriouſly!

The Hiſtories of the world, and of the Church, have given us melancholy exam-

ples of thoſe who have erred in theſe points, on the right hand, and on the left. What then ſhall thoſe do who would avoid both extremes, and keep a conſcience void of offence towards God, and towards men? Let them learn of their divine Maſter this two-fold duty; To render unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Let us calmly conſider theſe two precepts.

I. At the time when our Lord ſpoke theſe words, the ſceptre, according to the prophecy of Jacob, had departed from Judah, and Tiberius Cæſar governed the Jews, by Herod a tributary King, and Pontius Pilate a Roman Officer. Cæſar was the common name of the Roman Emperors, as Pharaoh had been of the Kings of Egypt. By Cæſar therefore we may underſtand our Lord to mean, when ſpeaking to all his people, the ſupreme Civil Power in any nation of the world. This differs in various places according to the providence of God, who has diſpoſed it in ſuch an order as ſhall be beſt for the people, for whoſe ſake he has eſtabliſhed

magiſtracy

magiſtracy in its various forms. Our Lord's command therefore to all his followers is, Firſt, that they ſhould reverence this Power, which the preſent ſtate of the world ſo greatly needs; and, Secondly, that they ſhould contribute chearfully towards its ſupport.

How this command was enforced and obeyed, in the earlieſt and pureſt ages of the Church, we learn from the New Teſtament. The firſt miniſters of Chriſt were ſhining examples of this duty. It was ſaid of them, that they turned the world upſide down; ſo great was the power which accompanied their word, and ſo different were the right ways of the Lord which they taught and enforced, from the wiſdom and ways of this world. But did thoſe men who approved themſelves the miniſters of God by ſigns, and wonders, and mighty deeds,

"Who ſpake the dead alive, and living dead!"

Did they interfere with the Civil Government in any nation? Certainly had it been the will of their divine Maſter, the powers of the world had all been humbled at their feet. That ſcripture would have

been fulfilled to them, one of you ſhall chaſe a thouſand, and two of you ſhall put ten thouſand to flight. But their commiſſion did not extend thus far. Their miniſtry was a miniſtry of Reconciliation. They proclaimed a ſuffering Meſſiah, who was bruiſed for our iniquities, and who bore the puniſhment due to our ſins in his own body upon the tree. And when they were perſecuted by the civil government, the ſame mind was found in them which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus: for their Maſter's ſake they were content to be killed all the day long, and counted as ſheep for the ſlaughter.

And how did they teach thoſe who received their word. Herein we have line upon line and precept upon precept. Hear the great apoſtle of the Gentiles. Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers: For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, *reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that

* In any other manner, than the laws of the community direct. See Mr. Weſley's Notes: The primitive Chriſtians appealed to thoſe laws that were in their favour. St. Paul ſhewed them the example,

that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves (κριμα,) condemnation. For Rulers (notwithſtanding ſome exceptions,) are not a terror to good works, but to evil: wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have (in general) praiſe of the ſame. For he is the miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the ſword in vain: For he is the miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake. For this cauſe pay you tribute alſo; for they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. I exhort, ſays the ſame Apoſtle, that ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for Kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable

exemple, Acts xvi. 35—39. xxii. 25—29. But when there was no law to protect them, they ſubmitted to ſuffer, for their Maſter did not allow them to reſiſt *by force*.

life

life in all godlineſs and honeſty. For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.

Hear alſo what St. Peter teaches, ſubmit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the King as ſupreme, or unto Governors, as unto them that are ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well. As ſervants of God, honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King.

The ancient Church which learned of them was conſpicuous for treading in their ſteps. The apologies for the Chriſtian Religion, publiſhed by the Fathers, abound with declarations of reverence, and of their deſign chearfully to ſupport the ruling powers. They challenged their enemies to prove that any Chriſtian had oppoſed the magiſtrates, or had favoured ſedition. They held all ſuch proceedings in abhorrence, and regarded them as inſtances of rebellion againſt Chriſt, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: and they have herein left us an example to tread in their ſteps.

II. But

II. But while according to their divine Maſter's precept and example, they rendered to Cæſar the things that were Cæſar's, did they render to any creature the things which were God's? What theſe are our Lord has told us, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve. Did they conſent to worſhip and ſerve him according to the will of man? No: they were all aware of this idolatry. They would have no other Gods before him. They knew that *before him* all were alike. They knew that kings, if they would worſhip God acceptably, muſt worſhip him with a pure conſcience; and that to be governed therein by any hope or fear which has not him for its object, muſt be an abomination to him, who has commanded *all* his creatures to ſanctify him in their heart, and to make him their fear and their dread: and that in vain they worſhip, whoſe fear towards him is taught by the precepts of men. He is equally the Lord of the King and the Peaſant; and the word that he ſpake ſhall judge them both in that day. While therefore they honoured all men, they knew no man after

after the flesh, but by manifestation of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the fear of God.

But it is a melancholy fact, that from the earliest ages, there have been Rulers of this world who have forgotten by whom they reigned, and have invaded his rights who in his providence placed them upon their Thrones. They have, in this respect, cherished an impious jealousy concerning the God of heaven and earth, who is the blessed and only Potentate. They were not satisfied with ruling in due subordination to him, but have invaded his rights, and arrogated to themselves that high prerogative of God, the government of conscience. Whenever this has been done, those who before obeyed in the fear of God, and set an example to the unthinking unstable multitude, have uniformly resisted unto blood rather than debase their consecrated hearts, or bow their knees to either dead or living idols. Thus when Nebuchadnezzar, in his pride, would convert the whole nation to the worship of his golden image, by means of the burning fiery furnace, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abed-nego*,

Abed-nego, three captive Jews, ſcorning the ſervile example of nations, people, and languages, braved the wrath of the King, being determined to ſuffer rather than ſin: while their faithful Lord (who afterward commanded to pay tribute to Cæſar,) honours their conſtancy, appears with them in the fire, and ſays in effect to their mighty perſecutor, "in as much as you did it to them, you did it unto me!".

Daniel, the man greatly beloved, is another ſhining example ſet before us. He rendered to the Cæſar of that day the things which were his; inſomuch that even his enemies confeſſed, "We ſhall not be able to find any fault againſt this Daniel, except we find it againſt him concerning the law of his God." Yet theſe impious men dared to attack him in this ſacred point. They procured a Decree forbidding all men to pray, except to the King, for thirty days, on pain of being caſt into the den of lions: thus making him in effect the God of the land. The man of God determined to ſuffer, rather than worſhip man that ſhall die. His God bears witneſs to him; and the ſavage beaſts,

conſtrained

conſtrained by divine power, reverence him as they did man before the fall. He is taken up with honour out of the den, and the name of the true God is through his conſtancy proclaimed throughout the eaſtern world.

The Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians trode in theſe ſhining footſteps. Their reverence of the Civil Power, was manifeſt to all. But when commanded by the Rulers not to preach the goſpel, to worſhip idols, to tranſgreſs their divine Maſter's precepts, or omit any thing which he commanded them to do, we hear them with one voice aſſerting the ſacred rights of conſcience, and aſking their impious perſecutors, "Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye!" Their conſtancy herein triumphed over all oppoſition. The force of truth at length overcame the world, and the croſs was eſtabliſhed on the throne of the Cæſar's!

But how ſoon did the fine gold become dim, and the faithful city become an harlot, how ſoon did *Papal* Rome vie with *Heathen* Rome, and dare to dictate to the

conſciences

conſciences of men both what they ſhould believe and how they ſhould worſhip? How ſoon was the word of God made void by the traditions of men, and a worldly religion eſtabliſhed by the power of the ſword! the Kings of the earth joined with *the man of ſin*, and raiſed a carnal ſyſtem, oppoſite to the ſpirituality and heavenly nature of the kingdom of Chriſt (and therefore called in ſcripture *Antichriſt*,) while all who dared to contend for the faith once delivered to the ſaints, were given up to torments and to death.

But it may be ſaid, "Chriſtianity is now reformed, according to the oracles of God." It is ſo in many places. But have the ſacred rights of conſcience been always maintained in Proteſtant Kingdoms? Have Sovereigns and Rulers, even in theſe, always taken care not to invade the prerogative of God? We cannot ſay this. It is a melancholy truth that even in our own land, ſince the reformation, deſpite has been done in this reſpect to the Spirit of grace. It may tend to increaſe our gratitude to the gracious Governor of the world, to take a ſhort view of thoſe melancholy

choly times, when Proteſtants revived the flames of perſecution, and to contraſt with them our preſent happy days of Chriſtian liberty.

I would aſk then what freedom with reſpect to the worſhip and ſervice of God, did that zealous Proteſtant Queen Elizabeth allow? Burning it is true was out of faſhion in her days. But how many did ſhe hang only for aſſerting their right to worſhip God according to their own conſcience? King James, her ſucceſſor, did not proceed to ſuch lengths; but did he allow liberty of conſcience? By no means. During his whole reign, the Puritans were more or leſs perſecuted. In the following reign, their ſufferings were rather encreaſed than diminiſhed. Many of them died in priſon, and many more were reduced to the deepeſt poverty by fines, and proſecutions; till wearied out with this oppreſſion, many of them fled for refuge to the wilds of America.

To ſhew the tyranny of the ſecond Charles, it will be only needful to give an extract from two publick monuments, *the Act of Uniformity*, and *the Act againſt Conventicles*.

*Conventicles.** In the former it is enacted, "That every Parſon, Vicar, or Miniſter "whatever, who has any benefice within "theſe Realms, ſhall before the 24th of "Auguſt next, openly and publickly de-"clare, his unfeigned aſſent and conſent "to all and every thing contained in the "book of common prayer, or ſhall ipſo "facto be deprived of all his benefices! "Likewiſe if any Dean, Prebendary, Maſ-"ter, Fellow, Chaplain, or Tutor of any "College, Hall, Houſe of learning, or "Hoſpital; any publick Profeſſor, or "other perſon in holy Orders, any School-"maſter, or Teacher, or Tutor in any "private family, do not ſubſcribe thereto, "he ſhall ipſo facto be deprived of all his "places, and ſhall be utterly diſabled from "continuing therein!"

By this act thouſands of men, guilty of no crime, were ſtript of all they had, and with their families turned out of houſe and home and reduced to little leſs than beggary, for no other fault real or pretended, but becauſe they did not dare to render to Cæſar, or to man, the things

* See Mr. Weſley's Thoughts on Liberty.

which

which were God's: to worſhip him according to other men's conſciences! but it did not reſt here. It was further declared, that "if any of them acted in the before "mentioned capacities, without having "ſubſcribed thereto, he ſhould ſuffer three "months impriſonment without bail or "mainprize!"

By the act againſt Conventicles, if any perſon ſhould aſſemble to worſhip God, except in the Churches of the eſtabliſhment, they were firſt robbed of all their ſubſtance, and, if they perſiſted, of their liberty alſo: often of their lives. Such was the liberty of conſcience that Engliſhmen enjoyed during the reign of the *Stuarts!* Can we wonder therefore that the Lord permitted their total overthrow by the Revolution of 1688?

But does any man in this nation now ſuffer any thing like this? Does our preſent King (or did any of that family) perſecute any man for his religion? Has not every man in this nation a legal, as well as a natural right, to worſhip God according to his own conſcience? Look round you and ſee how religious communities of

every

every deſcription ſit under their own vine and fig-tree, none making them afraid! compare the former days with thoſe that are now, and you will ſay, "The lines are fallen to us in pleaſant places, and we have a goodly heritage."

Let us then be grateful for the bleſſings we enjoy. Let us fear God, and honour the King. Let us be ſtedfaſt and unmoveable herein. Let us render to all their due; but to our God, who loved us, and has bought us with his blood, let us render our heart and our life. Let us pray that our peace, and ability to receive and do good, may be continued to us. But ſhould the heavens again grow black with the clouds of perſecution: ſhould *infidelity* in its zeal againſt *ſuperſtition*, blaſpheme the Holy Name whereby ye are called, and vilify that religion which is of God, and which breathes peace and good will to men: or ſhould Papal tyranny again rear its head, and ſtrive to prop its worldly ſyſtem by the old weapons of force or fraud:—Call to mind the former days. Suffer not as evil-doers; but if you ſuffer for well-doing, for rendering to God the

things

things which are God's, wonder not as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you. Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Take unto you his whole armour, that ye may be able to ſtand in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand before him with joy, who

"Rides in the Whirlwind, and directs the Storm,"

Remember, the Government is upon his ſhoulder, and that the fierceneſs of man ſhall turn to his praiſe. Men who fear not God, may think they do mankind ſervice when they tear the outward Church to pieces. But the CHURCH OF CHRIST is built upon a Rock, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall never prevail. If indeed ye are members of it, let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Let it be ſeen, amidſt the craſh of worldly ſyſtems, that there are thoſe in the world, who fearing the Lord, and rendering to all their due, are as Mount Sion, which cannot be moved, but ſtandeth faſt for ever.

BRITISH MUSEUM 9 NOV 70

FINIS.